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ABSTRACT

In 1977, the Florida Collegiate Consortium for International/Intercultural Education was established to provide a coordinated approach to international education within the state. The consortium is governed by a board of directors, composed of the presidents of member institutions, and a steering committee, made up of representatives chosen by board members. The purposes of the consortium are to provide international/intercultural learning experiences for students in the participating colleges; to conserve limited resources through cooperative efforts and the maintenance of a common catalog of information on courses, programs, and activities; to facilitate the transfer of credits among member institutions; to increase awareness of international education and its quality; and to serve as liaison between national organizations and institutions. Between 1977 and 1982, the consortium expanded from 6 community colleges to 15 colleges and universities, which together enroll 60% of the college student population in the state. Major accomplishments of the consortium during this period included the development of a study abroad program in Jamaica, cooperative arrangements whereby programs sponsored by a member college are open to other members' students, and sponsorship of legislation in support of international education. A joint program with Quebec's government and a review of policies for overseas academic programs are among the activities planned by the consortium. (HB)

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THE FLORIDA COLLEGIATE CONSORTIUM FOR INTERNATIONAL/INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION: FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS

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THE FLORIDA COLLEGIATE CONSORTIUM FOR INTERNATIONAL/INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION: FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS

International education is on the move in Florida. While several colleges and universities had been active in a variety of programs for some time, 1977 signaled the beginning of a more coordinated approach with the formation of the Florida Collegiate Consortium for International/Intercultural Education.

The Consortium is the result of a growing awareness among colleges and universities in Florida of the importance of international/intercultural education and also the realization that the sharing of existing programs, as well as a cooperative approach toward new efforts, can produce substantial benefits for higher education students in Florida. The initiative for the organization came from several community college presidents. Among them were Dr. A. Hugh Adams, Broward Community College; Dr. James Gollattscheck, Valencia Community College; and Dr. Maxwell King, Brevard Community College.

The first half of 1977 saw the Consortium take shape. Earlier efforts to form a statewide organization involving all Florida colleges had failed to produce a consensus, and the decision was made to proceed with those institutions that were committed to the concept. At a statewide meeting held in 1977 and attended by representatives of several two-year institutions, agreement was reached to move ahead with the creation of the organization. Six community colleges formed the nucleus; other institutions would be invited to join as they became interested. A steering committee, whose task was to draft the consortium agreement, was appointed.

The Consortium agreement provides that the organization be governed by a Board of Directors and a Steering Committee. The Board of Directors, comprised of the Presidents of the member institutions and chaired by one president elected by the Board, provides general direction for the Consortium.

Dr. Hugh Adams and Dr. James Gollattscheck were the first two presidents of the Consortium, and Dr. Bernard Sliger of Florida State University serves as Consortium President for 1982-84. The Steering Committee is comprised of institutional representatives appointed by each member of the Board of Directors. Steering Committee officers include Executive Director, Associate Director, and Secretary-Treasurer. The Steering Committee meets regularly three times a year, and is responsible for coordinating and implementing the various activities of the Consortium. Dr. William Greene of Broward Community College has served as Executive Director since the Consortium was formed in 1977.

The Consortium was created to serve a multitude of purposes and to provide the greatest flexibility possible for the participating institutions in making available to their students opportunities in international/intercultural education. Specific purposes of the organization, as stated in the Consortium Agreement, are:

1. To provide international/intercultural learning experiences for students enrolled in the participating colleges and universities;
2. To make available means for exploring and promoting a variety of international/intercultural cooperative activities;
3. To offer opportunities for professional development of each participating college's staff;
4. To help conserve limited resources through cooperative efforts;
5. To create and maintain a common catalog of information concerning international/intercultural courses, programs, and activities;
6. To engage in constructive efforts to promote ease of transfer of international/intercultural course credits among the participating institutions;

7. To foster efforts to increase awareness of international/intercultural education;
8. To assist in efforts to increase the international dimension in the curriculum in each of the participating institutions;
9. To continue to seek to ensure the quality of international/intercultural education programs;
10. To serve as a liaison agency among national organizations and consortia;
11. To promote opportunities for the sharing of international/intercultural educational expertise among the participating institutions; and
12. To arrange workshops, special seminars, and opportunities for other special activities on international/intercultural education.

While the initial thrust for the Consortium originated with community and junior colleges in Florida, it was agreed at the outset to solicit the involvement of the State University System. Several universities were conducting ongoing programs in the field of international education, and it was felt that they could provide valuable assistance and expertise and also derive benefits of their own. The original membership of the Consortium enjoyed the active participation of one university, Florida International, and four additional universities applied for membership during the first year of operation. As of the Fall, 1982, the Consortium has fifteen members: nine community/junior colleges, five universities, and one private college. Current members include:

Biscayne College
Broward Community College
Brevard Community College
Daytona Beach Community College
Florida International University
Florida State University

Gulf Coast Community College	University of Florida
Miami-Dade Community College	University of South Florida
Palm Beach Junior College	University of West Florida
Pensacola Junior College	Valencia Community College
Seminole Community College	

These institutions are among the largest in Florida. They have collectively an enrollment in excess of 300,000 students; this represents approximately 60% of the total higher education student population in the State.

Several major accomplishments have been realized during the first five years of operation. A statewide meeting was held in 1977 in which representatives of member colleges and universities met with higher education leaders and government officials from Jamaica for the purpose of exploring study program possibilities in that country. This led to a successful joint venture between Valencia Community College and Broward that saw students from both institutions study Geology and Sociology in Jamaica. Member institutions participated in a two-month statewide visitation by an internationally recognized educator from India in 1978. In 1981, faculty from member institutions participated in a series of workshops sponsored by the Consortium for International Studies Education (CISE); these workshops emphasized increasing awareness of global issues at the undergraduate level. The Executive Director of the Consortium served on the Florida Advisory Council on Global Education which produced the State Plan for Global Education in Florida; the Consortium formally endorsed the plan and sponsored a reception in Tallahassee in honor of its adoption by the State Board of Education.

A Consortium newsletter has been published twice each year since 1980. This newsletter has provided a valuable service by disseminating information

regarding international/intercultural activities among member institutions and throughout the State. Ms. Joyce Howard of Florida State University serves as the editor of the newsletter.

A major purpose in establishing the Consortium was, of course, program-sharing, and this has been of particular value in the area of study-abroad programs. Many colleges and universities in Florida have been conducting highly successful overseas academic programs for many years; the Consortium has become a vehicle whereby these programs are made available to all students enrolled at Consortium institutions. While this had always been technically possible, the framework was established for the systematic distribution of information. A common catalog of study-abroad opportunities has been developed and each member institution is able to offer the programs of other member institutions. Community/junior college students may participate in programs sponsored by member universities. Broward has developed a Semester-in-Spain program that has been shared with all member colleges and universities; cooperating institutions may advertise the program as their own and any number of students can be served. Finally, future potential for overseas study programs is enhanced as cooperative efforts by two or more institutions will result in a sharing of resources and greater student involvement.

The Consortium authored and sponsored a resolution for consideration by the State Legislature recognizing and supporting the components of international education in higher education in Florida. The Florida House of Representatives formally adopted the resolution (HR 960) in March, 1982, and this resolution stands as a strong statement of legislative support for international education activities in the State.

Two statewide international education conferences have been sponsored by the Consortium. The first, held in Hollywood in 1979, had as its theme,

"Global Perspectives; Internationalizing the College Curriculum." The 1981 conference in Winter Park emphasized "International Perspectives in Higher Education." Both conferences were designed to serve the needs of teaching faculty in colleges and universities and provided specific information on developing and improving international education activities. Each conference attracted more than 125 participants.

Future activities planned for the Consortium include programs to be conducted in cooperation with the Government of Quebec, a review of policies and evaluation procedures for overseas academic programs, and a third statewide international education conference tentatively scheduled to be held in Tallahassee during the Fall of 1983.

International/Intercultural Education is indeed moving ahead in Florida. The commitment being demonstrated by Consortium colleges and universities is encouraging. Higher education is addressing the global agenda and establishing it as a priority item. Problems persist, but there is a growing awareness of the importance of providing today's college students with an international/intercultural dimension. While institutions will continue to act independently in many ways, the Florida Collegiate Consortium for International/Intercultural Education provides a vehicle by which much can be accomplished.

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